

STALKING & INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE



What is Stalking?

- A series of repeated incidents (3 or more) that causes a fear of physical injury and/or significant mental anguish or distress to a person or someone close to them.

Stalking Facts



Anyone can be a victim of stalking.



It is a tactic used by abusers in Intimate Partner Violence.



The majority of victims know the offender as a current or former partner.



Stalking Tactics



- Sending unwanted text messages.
- Making relentless phone calls.
- Sending spam and emails.
- Showing up and/or waiting at place of work.
- Leaving unwanted gifts outside of door/on car.
- Driving by the home at all hours.
- Damaging the car or other property.
- Posting on social media cruel or untrue messages.
- Posting intimate pictures or false statements to ruin their reputation.
- Approaching and forcing a conversation.



Context is Critical



- Because the stalker is often a current or former intimate partner, the stalking behaviors often have specific meaning that is only understood between the offender & victim.
- Stalking criminalizes otherwise non criminal behavior (e.g. text messages, phone calls, Facebook posts, driving by someone's home, sending emails...).

It is important to listen to stalking victims and believe them.



Early Intervention

First responders' response is critically important:

“By the time a stalking victim reports incidents to law enforcement, the stalking behavior has been well established and... victim-initiated countermeasures have failed”

-Klein et al.,
A Statewide Study of Stalking and Its Criminal Justice Response, 2009.

Stalking is one of the few crimes where early intervention can prevent violence and death.

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The Impact

Stalking adversely affects victims in many ways:

- Unable to sleep
- Unable to eat
- Anxiety about going out
- Afraid all the time
- Hypersensitivity to noise
- Anxious about engaging in everyday activities, such as going online, social media
- Depression
- Anger
- Victims have many and varied reactions to stalking and they are all valid.
- No one reacts to stress or trauma in the same way.
- The trauma that stalking causes can affect memory and ability to re-tell what has happened.
- Many victims are afraid to tell anyone because they are embarrassed and uncertain whether they will be believed or whether they can “prove” the tactics.

It is important to be patient, to listen, to allow the victim to tell their story, and most importantly, to believe them.

References:

- The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010 Summary Report (2011)
- The RECON Typology of Stalking, Mohandie et. al., (2006)
- Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide, McFarlane et al. (1999)
- Delaware Criminal Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, § 1312
- NNEDV's Tech Safety Project
- Stalking Prevention and Resource Center



Intimate Partner Stalking

Understanding the relationship between the victim and offender is important for recognizing the fear the victim is feeling, how the victim responds, and how the stalker gets access to the victim.

For all stalking victims the most common relationship between the victim-offender is an intimate partner relationship, either current or former.

Intimate Partner stalkers are more likely to:

- Physically approach
- Be insulting and threatening
- To escalate
- To use weapons
- To re-offend

A **combination** of physical abuse and stalking is a greater indicator of potential lethality than either behavior alone.



Responding to Stalking

- Disengagement – Do not respond to stalking because any contact is a source of encouragement to the stalker.
- Document – Keep a record of the behaviors, even activities that you cannot ‘prove’ were done by the stalker, but given the pattern you suspect. This record helps show law enforcement the pattern of behavior.
- Reach Out to an Advocate – call the Domestic Violence hotline to get connected to an advocate.

24 Hour Domestic Violence Hotlines:

New Castle County:	302-762-6110
Kent & Sussex Counties:	302-422-8058
Abriendo Puertas-Bilingual Hotline (Sussex County):	302-745-9874

